

Sgt James Logan Bell 1100845 RAFVR

James was born on 13 June 1908 in Airdrie, Lanarkshire, Scotland, the son of James and Jeannie Logan Bell.

In 1929 James graduated from Glasgow University with a Bachelor of Law Degree and was indentured in his Father's company, James Bell and Sons Solicitors, in Airdrie before becoming a partner. Between 1930 and 1939 he was employed as a defence Solicitor.

James joined the RAFVR in 1940 and trained as a WOp/AG before joining 110 Sqn at RAF Wattisham, Suffolk.

In December 1941 110 Sqn was detached from RAF Wattisham to RAF Lossiemouth, Moray, Scotland in preparation for "Operation Archery", a large combined land, sea and air attack by British and Norwegian forces on the German bases on the islands of Vaagso and Maaloy off the Norwegian coast.

On 27 December 1941, six squadron aircraft were tasked with attacking enemy shipping off the Norwegian Coast between Obrestad and Flekke Fjord with the intention of drawing off German fighters from the Commando raid.

At 09:35 James, operating as the WOp/AG, and the crew departed RAF Lossiemouth, in Blenheim IV Z7317 (VE). A convoy was found and 4 of the 6 aircraft broke away from the leader near Eigeroe to attack the ships 4 miles south. Only 2 Blenheims were seen to leave the convoy and of those, one made a bad landing in the sea after being attacked by an enemy fighter and the other made a good landing in the sea with its port engine on fire. James and the crew were posted missing, only the body of the pilot was recovered for burial.

The outcome of the operation at the time was regarded as a success with the destruction of facilities for manufacture of explosives, coastal defences, power station, nine merchant ships and four Heinkel aircraft. Although overall Allied casualties were considered relatively light, for Bomber and Coastal Commands it proved a costly exercise with the loss of eleven aircraft and thirty-one airmen killed. 110 Sqn lost 4 aircraft and crews.

Also killed : Flt Lt Richard Trevor Blewett RNZAF (Pilot); PO Matthew Murphy (Observer)

James has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

James is commemorated on Wall Panel 129